

Brodt's Hat Factory
423 Eleventh Street
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-480

HABS
DC,
WASH,
264-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS
DC,
WASH,
264-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BRODT'S HAT FACTORY
423 Eleventh Street, N. W.

HABS No. DC-480

Location: Square 348, Lot 813, 423 Eleventh Street, N.W., Washington, O.C. East side of Eleventh Street between 'E' Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Present Owner: 1001 Pennsylvania Associates (February 1930).

Present Occupant: Brodt's Hat Factory

Present Use: Manufacture and retail sale of hats.

Future Plans: The structure will be incorporated into a new full block, multi-use structure, designed by Hartman-Cox with Smith Segreti Tepper, and built for developers D.W. Evans and R.S. Cohen.

Significance: Brodt's Hat Factory, although not in its original form, is important for its contribution to the block as an early Twentieth Century facade over the original facade, carefully blended with surrounding Nineteenth Century facades. The factory has been located here since the early Twentieth Century, previously located at 419 Eleventh Street, and continues to function within the structure.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: Although no original building permits are available to precisely date initial construction, assessment records and available building permits estimate construction between 1869-1873. Improvement assessment increased from \$3821 in 1869 to \$6000 in 1873. The first available permit is dated 1895, when an addition, still extant, was built.
2. Architect: Unknown.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. References are the District of Columbia General Assessment Records and the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds.

1939 Assessed as north one-half of Lot 8 (now Lot 813) to Reichenbach.

1889 Assessed as north one-half of Lot 8 (now 813) to Flora White.

1899 Assessed to Charles White, Jr.

1971 Deed 7 November 1971, recorded 8 November 1971 in Liber 13281, Folio 112.

Maxwell Hurston and William Cafritz, Trustees
to

Maxwell Hurston and Lewis K. Kest, Trustees.

1980 Deed 6 March 1980, recorded 7 March 1980, in Instrument #7981.

M. Hurston

to

425 Eleventh Street Associates

4. Original plans and construction: Although no original drawings exist for Brodt's, Permit information does give some idea of the first floor layout. Permit #4527, November 1926, describes the removal of brick walls on the first and second floors and replacement with iron columns and beams. Judging from the location of existing columns, the brick walls seemed to have run east/west, forming three rooms.

The facade of Brodt's as originally built is partially visible in a photograph of the adjacent 425-429 Eleventh Street (See HABS No. D.C.-). It appears typical of commercial design following the Civil War. Possibly divided into four bays, windows have ornamental cast iron (?) hoods with two-over-two double-hung sash windows. The frieze of the entablature is arched above each fenestration, and a balcony extends, apparently, the width of the facade. There were quoins on the north and south walls. The street level storefront is not visible from the photo, but an awning did extend over the sidewalk.

Permits also indicate the original roof covering as slate.

5. Alterations and additions: Very few permits exist for the building. The first, #1057, 16 November 1885, called for a brick addition, measuring 18' 0" x 22' 0", to be built with a tin roof. It was to contain a four-HP engine and boiler.

In November, 1926 (Permit #4627, 15 November), architect Julius Wenig designed the extant storefront to replace the previous.

Brick walls on the interior of the first and second stories were removed and replaced by iron columns and beams. The contractor for the work was A.D. Brown. (Drawings not available). It is possible that at this time the first floor ceiling was replaced with the extant pressed metal ceiling, as it is coved into the 1926 columns. Permit #173288, 30 July 1933, indicates contractor P.H. Bishop erected the fire escape.

- B. Historical persons and events associated with the structure:

Karl Brodt opened his first hat shop at 508 Tenth Street, N.W., in 1878, according to Polk's Directories. In 1880, Brodt combined his hat fac-

tory and living quarters into 419 Eleventh Street (currently the Munch Room restaurant) (The drawings of a 1913 alteration to 419 Eleventh Street are attached as supplemental material). The Brodt Factory remained here until 1933, when equipment and personnel were moved to 423 Eleventh Street. Brodt's was run by family members until the early 1960's. Karl Brodt was a member of the Columbia Historical Society. (Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Volumes 25,26,27,28, and 30).

C. Bibliography

1. Primary Sources

District of Columbia Deed Records. Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

District of Columbia Tax Assessment Records, 1839-1922. National Archives, Environmental Resources Division, Record Group 351.

District of Columbia Building Permits, 1877-1950. National Archives, Environmental Resources Division, Record Group 351.

2. Secondary Sources

All of the following are available at the Washingtoniana Division of the Martin Luther King Library, District of Columbia:

Baist Real Estate Atlas Collection.

Polk's District of Columbia City Directories, 1865-1979.

Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Volumes 25, 26, 27, 28, and 30.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: Representing an early Twentieth Century design solution to "modernizing" a mid-Nineteenth Century commercial structure, Brodt's facade shows a growing preference for stripped ornamentation and replacement with subtle, clean detailing. Despite its transformation, the building blends well with surrounding facades.

2. Condition of fabric

a. Facade: Excellent Condition; needs cleaning and repointing.

b. Interior: Pressed metal ceiling is in good condition.

Staircases are stable, but obviously deteriorated. The balustrade from the second to third floors is original and is in good condition. The skylight above the third floor staircase is also in good condition. Flooring is tongue-in-groove wood and suffers from neglect.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Dimensions: Brodt's Hat Factory is three bays wide and three stories tall with a crawl attic space. With all additions the building measures 39' 0" x 80' 0".

2. Foundations: Probably are of brick and concrete.

3. Wall fenestration, finish and color: The facade of Brodt's Hat Factory is three bays wide and three stories tall with an attic crawl space. The storefront has steel and glass projecting show windows and an offset left double door. A cloth awning extends the width of the building and a painted sign for Brodt's is situated above the awning.

The second floor has three windows, the center being double size.

Each has a transom lite with brick lintels and stone sills. The four third-story windows are grouped over second story windows, with two windows over the double window of the second story. They are six-over-one double-hung sash with brick lintels and stone sills. A molded stone stringcourse extends the width of the facade above third story windows.

Above this stringcourse is a projecting molded cornice. A parapet wall above this is of brick with five parts; two recessed from the three in line with the facade. There is a slightly projecting molding atop this.

4. Structural system: The foundation is of brick and cement. Interior supports are iron beams and columns which were incorporated in 1926, replacing brick bearing walls. Floor joists are of wood.
5. Chimneys: Three brick chimneys are located along the north edge of the building at the rear and one on the south wall at the center.
6. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The principal entrance is a double glass and steel door, offset left. A secondary entrance offset right, is of wood and glass in a wood frame.
 - b. Windows: Upper floor windows are six-over-six double-hung sash with wood frames. The second story periphery windows are six-over-one double-hung sash, but also have triple-paned transoms. The center window is fixed glass with three double-paned transoms. All third floor windows are capped with bull-head brick (laid butt end out) and have stone lintels. The second story windows are elongated with multi-paned transoms. Periphery windows have small individual iron balustrades at sill level, reminiscent

of the original facade with balcony. The center bay is somewhat wider than that of the third floor and is one large fixed window with three double-paned transoms. All windows on this level are framed in brick running horizontally on the sides and vertically along the top. Corner intersections of the framings are accentuated with ivory coloured brick, diagonally laid.

7. Cornice: Above the third story windows is a horizontal molded metal band extending the width of the building. The cornice line repeats the three bays of the facade with indentations between the bays. Protruding sections are framed in bull-head brick with an ivory brick in a diagonal pattern. A molded metal parapet tops the cornice line.
8. Roof: The roof of Brodt's is flat, sloping slightly to the east (rear). It is covered in tin and tar, and ribbed for drainage. One skylight, rectangular in shape, is located at the rear (east) side of the building, above the staircase to the third floor.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans

- a. First floor: The majority of the first floor is open show area with partitions (not full height) for an office at the rear and storage to the south. Display cases fill both side walls and a counter showcase is located to the south of the center line. A slightly raised level in the rear of the show area is a small square room, housing the hat making equipment.
- b. Second and third floors are open storage space. A small rectangular repair room is located on the second level, center rear. A restroom on the third floor (west, south) contains original

plumbing (chain and tank features).

2. Stairways: The staircase to the second floor is located at the rear of the building along the north wall. The staircase and railing are unfinished wood, somewhat deteriorated. A quarter-turn staircase leads to the third floor, with the original finished wood balustrade. Newels are slightly rounded with a square base.
3. Flooring: Second and third stories are tongue-in-groove wood, unfinished, and suffering from neglect. First floor wood floor has been covered with tile in the showroom.
4. Wall and ceiling finish
 - a. First floor walls are covered with built-in show cases. Partitions are gypsum board with self-standing storage shelves. The coved ceiling is painted pressed metal in a floral design, and is in excellent condition. The ceiling is molded (coved) around structural piers.
 - b. Second and third floor walls appear to be plaster, but are covered with hand painted murals of a large scale. Their designs vary from chess sets to facial distortions. Pressed metal ceiling (same pattern as on first floor) are in fair condition. The ceiling skylight on the third floor is oval shaped with a double cross-hatch of wood.
5. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: All doors are paneled wood and are in fair condition. Interior doors exist only at the repair room on the second level and a restroom door on the third floor.
 - b. Windows: Interior window trim is simple wood molding.

6. Hardware

- a. Plumbing: The third floor restroom contains early plumbing fixtures with raised tank and chain flush mechanism.
- b. Factory equipment: Since Brodt's hats are made on the premises, specialized equipment is located in the first floor work room. A boiler, (possibly the 4-HP engine installed in 1885, permit # 1057, when the addition was built) is used to steam the fabric for shaping. A crown iron is used to shape the crown of the hat and a sandbagging piece is used for attaching any of the many available trims. The equipment appears to be original.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Brodt's facade fronts on the east side of Eleventh Street. It is flanked by commercial structures of compatible height; one being built c. 1902 (425-429 Eleventh Street, HABS No. D.C.-), the other built c.1873. The remainder of the east side of Eleventh Street is composed of three and four-story Nineteenth Century commercial structures (with the exception of the Munch Room, 419 Eleventh Street, which is a one-story building; and incidentally the original location of Brodt's).

At the corner of Eleventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue is the Evening Star Building, the Old Post Office, and the Internal Revenue Service building of the Federal Triangle.

Eleventh Street itself is one of the widest north/south axes in the city at 110' from curb to curb, as was intended in L'Enfant's plan for Washington.

Square 348 is located in the center of an area that historically functioned as the major newspaper printing and paper supply area

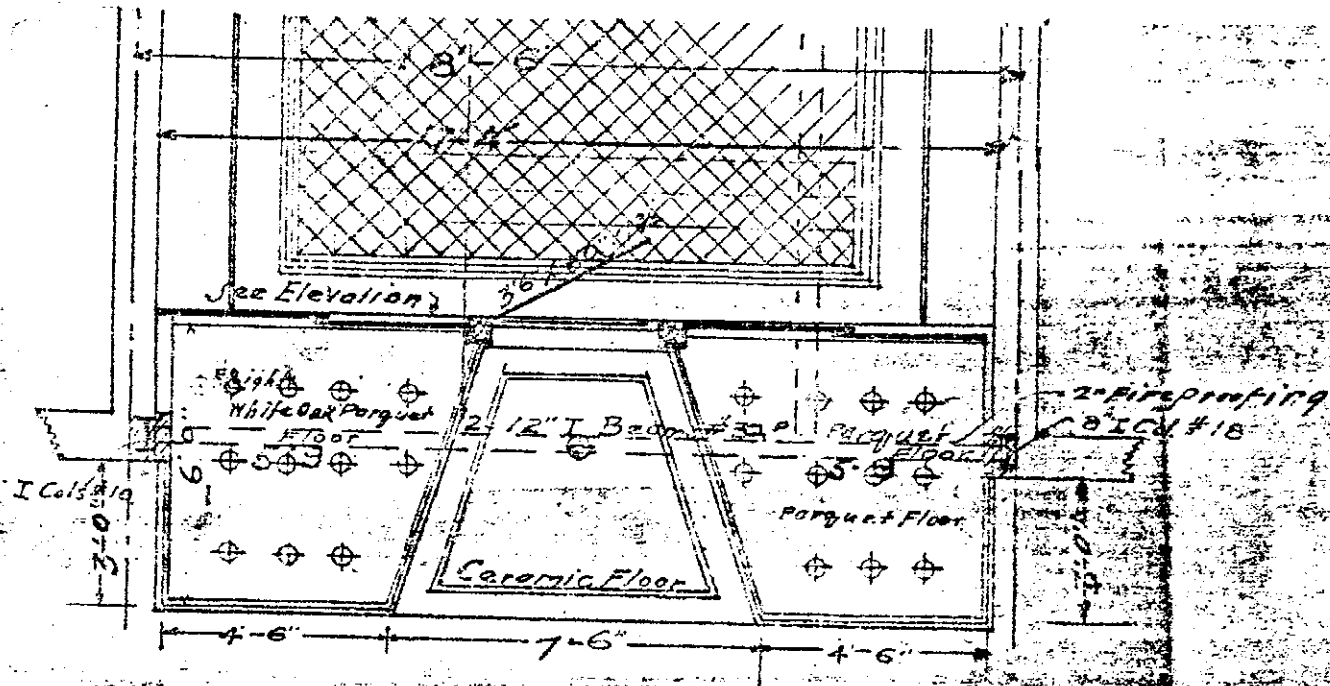
for Washington during the Nineteenth Century. Eleventh Street was the location of various paper company warehouses, book binding and printing companies, hand embossing firms and a wallpaper manufacturer. Brodt's Hat Factory was well situated as a small, self-contained industry amongst many others.

Prepared by W.F. Hunter
Historian
PADC
February 1981

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and Stipulation 6 of the PADC Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The recording of the project was completed under the general supervision of Jeffrey S. Wolf, Architect with PADC. Historic data was compiled and edited by Wendy Hunter, also with PADC. Documentary photographs were taken by J. Wolf.



PLAN STORE 419 11th ST. N.W.

PLAN SHOWING ALTERATIONS TO
N^o 419-11th ST. N.W. LOT 7 SQR. 328
BRODT'S INC. - OWNERS.

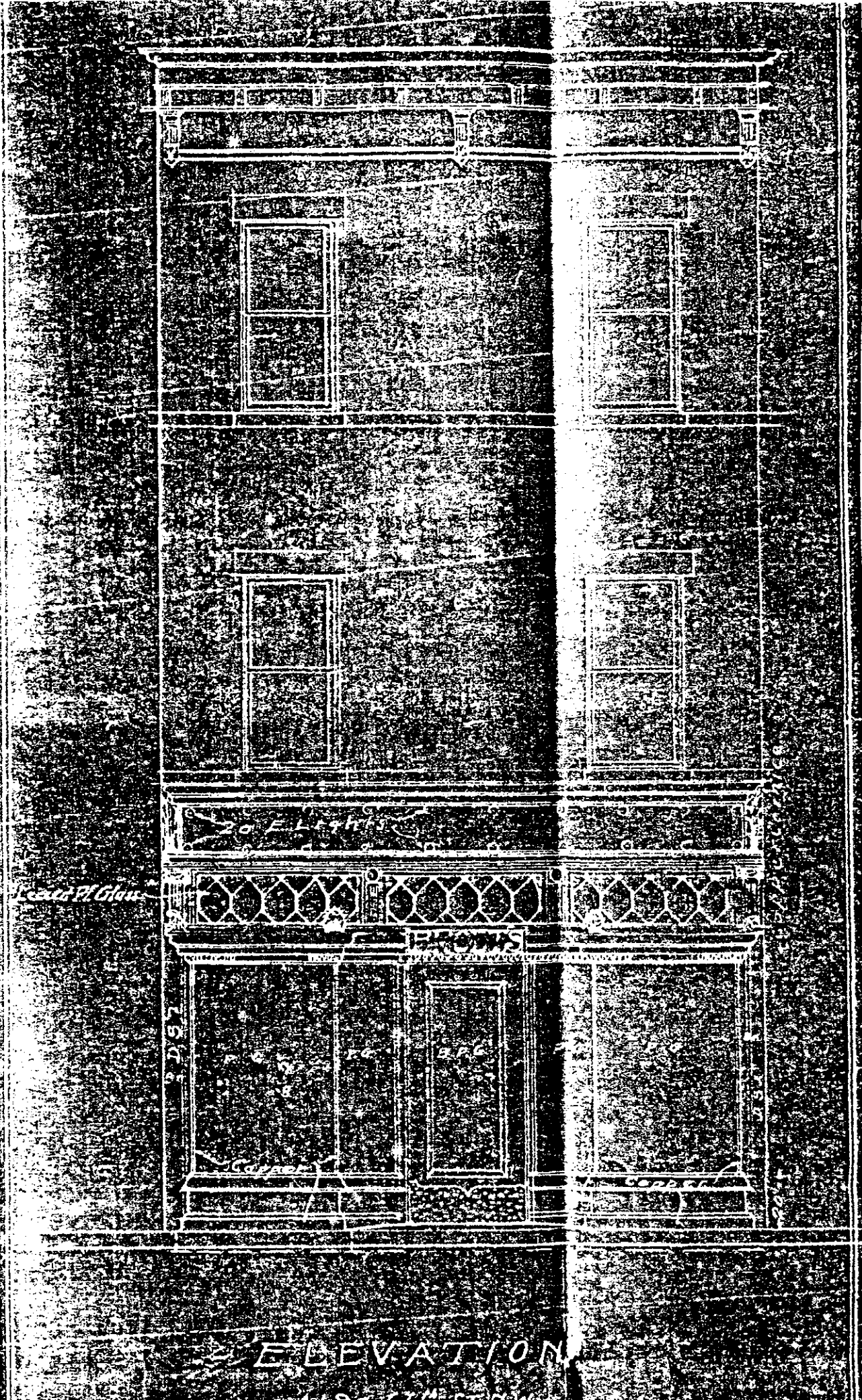
Scale: 1/4" = 1'

A. S. J. Kinison - Archt.
12-25-12

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ELEVATION